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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 WARSAW 001153

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PREL PGOV AF PL

SUBJECT: NO DAYLIGHT BETWEEN POLISH, U.S. POSITIONS ON
AFGHAN PRIORITIES

REF: A. STATE 118297

¶B. BRADLEY E-MAIL 11/10/09 (WARSAW DAILY REPORT)

Classified By: Political Counselor F. Daniel Sainz for Reasons 1.4 (b)
and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Poland agrees that Afghanistan's partners need to urge the GoA to tackle a few top priorities, such as improving good governance, fighting corruption, and bolstering Afghan security forces. MFA officials told us the West should make clear to President Karzai that continued support depends on his full cooperation, and signal our contacts with alternative Afghan leaders. The Poles hailed the EU's new engagement strategy, and are looking for ways -- such as increased EUPOL contributions -- to take part. Our MFA contacts also welcomed President Sarkozy's efforts to persuade Chancellor Merkel that ISAF partners need to adopt the same Rules of Engagement. Elsewhere, MFA officials have told us there have been inter-ministerial discussions about changing Poland's own national Rules of Engagement in a way that might make it easier for Polish commanders to go on the offensive. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) The GOP wants what we want when it comes to liaising with the Government of Afghanistan: a few, core messages carefully coordinated within the international community. Consistent with Ref A approach, Ambassador Krzysztof Szumski, Director of the MFA's Asia-Pacific Department, told PolCouns that Afghanistan's partners should focus only on 2-3 key messages -- for example, anti-corruption, good governance, and civilian security -- to avoid overloading the new government in Kabul. Ambassador Jerzy Wieclaw, Director for MFA's South Asia Division and former Charge in Kabul, added that we should specify clearly what kinds of actions we expected, say, in the anti-corruption fight. Wieclaw said the GoA should pay special attention to the kinds of low-level malfeasance that have such an impact on Afghans' daily lives; rooting it out would be a highly visible sign of good governance.

¶3. (C) Both Szumski and Wieclaw said we should make clear to President Hamid Karzai that continued international support depended on his full cooperation, given public concerns in ISAF partner countries. Wieclaw thought it possible to subtly remind Karzai that the West has other partners in Afghanistan, leaders who emerged during the elections. In our ongoing dealings with Abdullah Abdullah, we should urge him not to try to undermine Karzai's legitimacy, which could destabilize the country. Abdullah should be encouraged to act like a "loyal opposition," and to

focus on upcoming parliamentary elections.

¶4. (C) Of course, military strategy must also be coordinated among international partners. Wieclaw hailed French President Sarkozy's efforts to persuade German Chancellor Merkel that ISAF partners need to have common Rules of Engagement. The enemy exploits differences among different countries' strategies, he said. Wieclaw indicated he was not aware of Foreign Minister Sikorski's efforts to amend Polish national Rules of Engagement. (Embassy Comment: MFA Security Department officials have told us that inter-ministerial discussions have taken place concerning amending the Polish Rules to make it easier to go on the offensive against combatants. At present, Polish military commanders need to get Defense Ministry approval before launching an attack. Ref B)

¶5. (C) Szumski welcomed the EU's policy of "Enhanced Engagement," which was discussed during the November 16-17 GAERC in Brussels. Poland appreciates both the uptick in EU activity and the emphasis on civilian development and reconstruction. Warsaw may contribute by stepping up involvement in EUPOL activities and supporting further development of the Afghan National Police. As Poland approaches the one-year anniversary of assuming security responsibility for Ghazni province, the GoP is preparing to release its assessment of the 30 or so civilian development projects it implemented in the province over the past year. The GoP will also propose additional projects, and will maintain the same level of funding for 2010, despite a difficult budget climate.

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¶6. (C) Poland's Afghanistan strategy was under "permanent review" within the GOP, according to Szumski. He acknowledged that many aspects of the military assessments underway in the Ministry of National Defense are not fully shared with working-level MFA officials, though senior MFA officials contribute to the study. Szumski said there were differing views within MFA on Poland's Afghanistan strategy, but he predicted there would be no wholesale revision of the current approach. In any case, the GOP awaited the Obama Administration's final decision on COMISAF's request for additional troops before considering next steps.

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